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SKILL TO APPLY LEGAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES OF INFORMATION AS CORRELATE OF UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL LIBRARY RESOURCES BY ACADEMICS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHERN, NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

This study examined the correlation between academics skill to apply legal and ethical issues of information and utilization of digital library resources in federal universities in Southern, Nigeria. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprises 6,653 academics with a sample size of 665 academics, selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Instruments for data collection were cognitive test for skill to apply ethical use of information and questionnaire used for utilization of digital library resources. The instruments were validated by three lecturers, one in department of Educational foundations and two in the Department of Library and information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Kuder- Richardson was used to establish the reliability for skill to apply legal and ethical issues of information, yielding the score 0.81 and Cronbach alpha for questionnaire yielding 0.81. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. In testing the hypotheses, P value was used to determine the Level of significance at 0.05 alpha level. Result show low positive correlation between academics skill to apply ethical and legal issues of information and utilization of digital library resources. The hypotheses were rejected, indicating a significant relationship between skill to apply ethical and legal issues of information and utilization of digital library resources. It was recommended that University Management and library management should join together to continuously educate their academic staff on ethics and legal issues in the utilization of information.

Key words: Information, Ethical use of information, Utilization of digital library resources, Information literacy, Academics.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The world has undergone drastic innovations due to proliferation of information, especially in digital format in this 21st century. This is why today; the world is referred to as “information society or age”. Ikenwe and Omigie (2015) opined that, “this 21st century is an information age where information has become paramount to thrive in a society and reliable information is the main bricks for building expertise in human endeavor”. According to Odu (2019), “information is any entity that provides the answer to a question or resolves uncertainty”. In addition, Etubi and Mahmud (2019) asserted that information is the result of processing, manipulating and organizing data that adds to the knowledge of the receiver. More concretely, information can be defined as knowledge or intellectual content in the form of processed data, ideas, messages and facts,

documented formally or informally in diverse format, endowed with purpose, meaning and it's communicated, which is capable of elevating an individual from novice to a knowledge state.

The 'pivot' of information cannot be over emphasized as it serves as a catalyst for development in all endeavors, which include education, social, personal, economic and national. Etubi and Mahmud (2019) added a bit of nuance to this, as they opined that "information as a catalyst for change has become as important as life itself". However, information currently is globally available in digital form in this digital era. It can therefore be rightly argued that utilization of digital library resources is an act of making effective use of information resources in digital or electronic format. More so, the increase in the volume of information has not only made searching and access to available information, especially digital information by academics necessary but also, skills to retrieve the information and utilize it in the most appropriate manner. "Everybody uses information and every person has an ethical responsibility in the way they use that information" Bothma, Cosijn, Fourie and Penzhorn (2014). Thus academics need skills to apply legal and ethical issues to enable them effectively utilize digital library resources in a responsible manner. Legal and ethical use of information is the act of applying information use ethics by a user to satisfy an information need or in the creation of further information or knowledge for dissemination or communication to others.

In the words of Unegbu and Onuoha (2014), "ethical issues in the use of information sources have to do with the right ways of using other people's information". The College of St Scholastica (2018) also defined legal and ethical use of information as "ethically using information by correctly citing resources in text and references". This neatly summarizes the fact that information emanates from a source and as such, the source should be recognized and acknowledged. Thus, the information should be properly cited, referenced and used fairly to avoid plagiarism and infringements on intellectual property rights of individuals. However, this research adopts the American Library Association (ALA) standard of Information Literacy to investigate academics skill to apply legal and ethical issues surrounding the use of information. According to ALA (2000), "information literate is able to apply the ethical, legal and socio-economic implications in the use of information; as well as apply laws, regulations and policies related to accessing and use of information".

In effect, information literate (academics) understands and applies ethical infractions in regard to the use and dissemination of information. Skill to apply legal and ethical issues focus on copyright, fair use, intellectual property right, right to access information, plagiarism and so on. Interestingly, academics as information users as well as disseminators of information, should ethically and responsibly exhibit skill in the manner they utilize digital library resources. Academics have access to digital library resources and create global information electronically. In some cases, this has made copying of scholars' intellectual content easy. Yet, the principles of copyright and fair use surrounding the use of information still apply to digital library resources. Thus, skill to apply ethical issues in the use of information is a necessity required by information literate, mostly academics for life- long learning.

Research Question

1. What is the correlation between lecturers' skill to apply legal and ethical aspect of information and utilization of digital library resources?

Research Hypothesis

Ho 1: Lecturers' skill to apply legal and ethical aspects of information does not have significant relationship with utilization of Digital library resources

Literature Review

Skill in applying legal and ethical issues of information use

Application of legal and ethical issues surrounding access and use of information is an integral part of becoming an information literate person. ALA (2000) opined an "information literate person is able to know the ethical, legal and socio- economic implications in the use of information as well as apply laws, regulations and policies related to information access and use". ACRL (2005) stated that "it entails understanding the ethical, legal and socio –economic issues in the use of information follow laws related to access and use of information and acknowledge information sources used". In effect, information literate understands legal and ethical infractions with regards to access, use and dissemination of information. Lau (2006) listed the break down on the legal and ethical issues as: "ability to know ethical use of information, respect the legal use of information, communicates information with acknowledgement of intellectual property and using relevant acknowledgement style standards".

Califonian University information literacy fact sheet cited in Ranaweera (2008) defined it "as the ability to understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and then access and use the information ethically and legally". Fisher and Wilson (2008) in their draft of information literacy standards emphasized that it "involves: understanding what constitutes plagiarism, use resources with proper attribution and accept responsibility for ideas

finally presented”. American Library Association (ALA, 2010) asserted that, “copyright laws applies to library’s online publications with authors and publishers and informing library users of copyright laws that applies to their use of digital information. Furthermore, copyright laws apply to library’s online publications with authors and publishers and informing library users of copyright laws that apply to their use of digital information”.

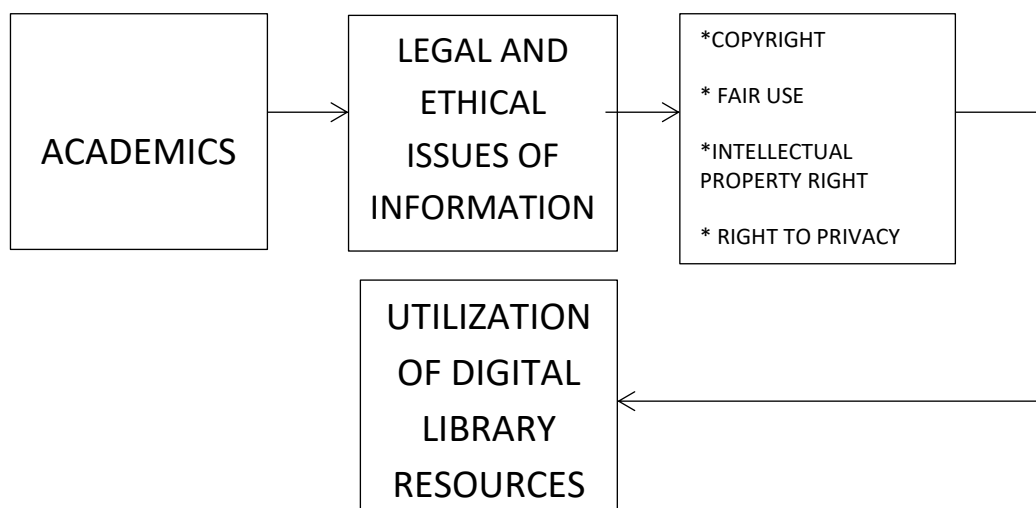
Martin (2013) stated that, if “an information literate can seek, use, create, store and disseminate information, they should do so in an appropriate and ethical manner”. “Martin (2013) presenting a learning outcome in ANCIL & Society College, National and University Libraries models relating to ethics outlined the following for an information literate: summarize basic method utilizing and sharing information without infringing on other people’s right; meet standards of conduct for academic integrity; understands their personal responsibility in the storage and sharing of information and develop the right technique within the legal framework”.

Bothma, Cosijn, Fourie and Penzhorn (2014) divided legal and ethical use of information by information literate into three groups. They are: “Information literate needs to understand the use of information correctly according to law, Information literate needs to understand when to acknowledge information sources and Information literate needs to understand how to acknowledge sources according to standards”. Nwosu, Obiamalu and Udem (2015) described it as the ability to demonstrate awareness of issues relating to ethics, data protection, copyright, plagiarism and other intellectual issues. The University of New Orleans (2016) summed up legal and ethical issues as: ability to recognize intellectual property concept, ability to defend it, incorporate other work and understand free access to and express information. According to Daland and Hidle, (2016), “good organization of references will make ethical use of sources easier, hence decreasing the chance of plagiarism”.

Karl-Mundt Library (2017), suggested that to use others work ethically, there is need to understand how to quote, paraphrase and cite the work of others to avoid plagiarism. The three key words mentioned by this author are; cite (giving credit to others ideas), paraphrase (reading and writing in one's own words) and plagiarism (using a person's idea as yours or misrepresentation of the idea of others without credit to them.). Obviously, legal and ethical considerations in information access, use and dissemination are paramount attribute to information user. The College of St Scholastica listed two ways that deals with legal and ethical concept as: copyright and plagiarism.

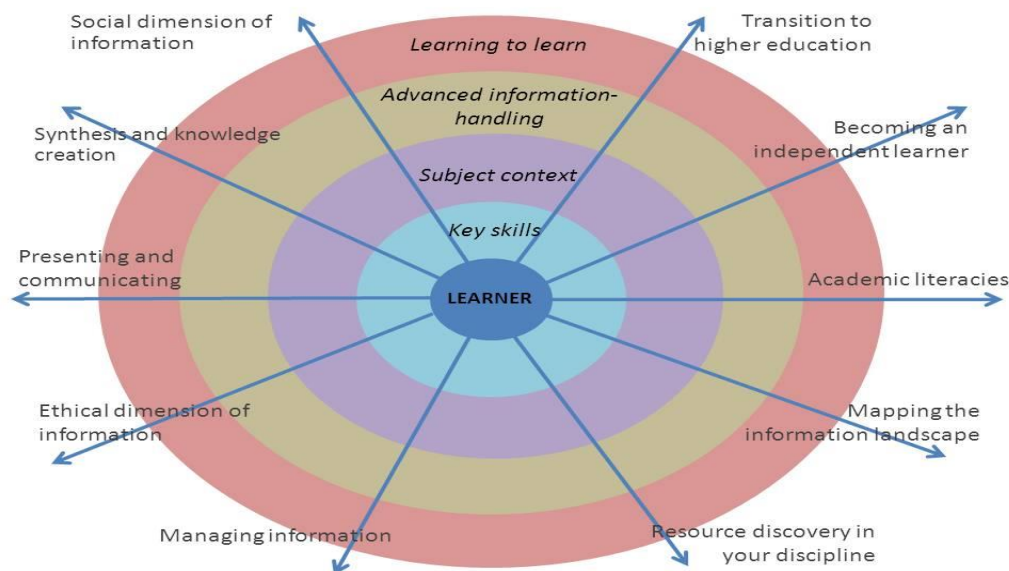
Conclusively, it is paramount an information literate (academics) have adequate knowledge on why information should be used in a responsible and ethical manner; acknowledge others' ideas by reporting appropriately.

Conceptual Framework



THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

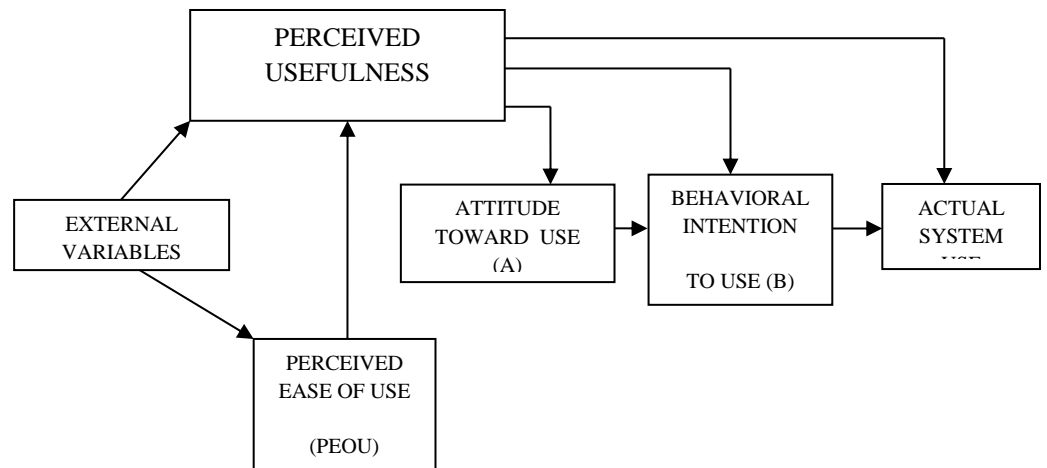
A New Curriculum for Information Literacy (ANCIL)



Adopted from Coonan, Secker, Wrathall and Webster (2012).

ANCIL presented information literacy as a continuous process involving skills, attitudes and behavioral trait surrounding information use. ANCIL divided information literacy (IL) into ten main clusters or strand. The aim of this framework is to assist academics improve on their level of IL by developing skill in each cluster or strand to enable them offer their best. This will not only help them find information, but also to utilize information legally and ethically. Skill to legally and ethically use information is a dimensional construct of information.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL (TAM) FOR UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL LIBRARY RESOURCES



(Adopted from Surendran (2012))

This model was adopted for utilization of digital library resources as it buttressed how an information system is accepted and utilized by an information user. TAM pointed out that two external variables such as perceived use (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) are important factors that influences users attitude in the use of information system or technology, which also determine their behavioral intention to utilize the system

Methodology

The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprises 6,653 academics in six federal universities in South-South, Nigeria. They are: Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE), University of Benin (UNIBEN), University of Port- Harcourt (UNIPORT), University of Calabar (UNICAL), Federal University Otuoke (FUO) and University of Uyo, (UNIUYO). The population of this study consists 6653 lecturers from all the Federal

universities with a sample size of 665 academics, selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. This represents 10% of academics from each faculty in the various institutions. Instruments for data collection was cognitive test and questionnaire used for utilization of digital library resources. The instrument was constructed by the researcher and validated by three lecturers, one in department of Educational foundations and two in the Department of Library and information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. 30 academics in Ambrose Alli University were used for the reliability. Kuder- Richardson was used to establish the reliability for skill to apply ethics and legal issues of information, yielding the score 0.81 and Cronbach alpha for questionnaire yielding 0.81. These scores were concluded high to consider the instrument reliable. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. In testing the hypotheses, P value was used to determine the Level of significance at 0.05 alpha level. Where the calculated p-value was less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. Where the null hypothesis was not rejected, the calculated p-value was greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05). All analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

This study adopts the correlation coefficient (r) and size of relationship interpreted by Nworgu (2015) as follows;

<u>Coefficient (r)</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
.00 to .20	Very low
.20 to .40	Low
.40 to .60	Moderate
.60 to .80	High
.80 and above	Very high

Findings

Pearson r on the correlation between lecturers' skills in applying legal and ethical aspects of information and utilization of digital library resources

Table 1.

Source of Variation	N	skills in applying legal and ethical aspects of information r	Utilization of digital library resources r	Remark
Skills in applying legal and ethical aspects of information	487	1.00	0.21	Low Positive Relationship
Utilization of digital library resources	487	0.21	1.00	

Table 1 indicates that, there is a low positive correlation of 0.21 existing between lecturers' skills in applying legal and ethical aspects of information and utilization of digital library resources.

Significance of Pearson's r on lecturers' skills in applying legal and ethical aspects of information and utilization of digital library resources

Table 2:

Source of Variation	N	skills in applying legal and ethical aspects of information r	Utilization of digital library resources r	df	p-value	Remark
Skills in applying legal and ethical	487	1.00	0.21			

aspects of information			485	0.00	Sig
Utilization of digital library resources	487	0.21	1.00		

Sig = Significant

Table 2 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 485df, the calculated r 0.21 has P .value 0.00 which is less than critical P .value 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The correlation between lecturers' skills in applying legal and social aspects of information and utilization of digital library resources was significant.

DISCUSSION

Relationship between academics' Skill to Apply Legal and Social aspect of Information and Utilization of Digital Library Resources

The result of research question one revealed a low positive correlation of 0.21 between lecturers' skill to apply legal and social aspects of information and utilization of digital library resources. This finding supports American Library Association (ALA, 2010) assertion which revealed that, "copyright laws applies to library's online publication and library users should be informed to imbibe copyright laws that applies to their use of digital information". The finding is in support with Mar-Round (2011) who affirmed that, many academic staff sees the importance of learning about bibliographic instruction and correctly citing and developing lists of references within copyright regulations necessary at the academic level as plagiarism is a serious offence in academia. However the findings contradicts Adedokun (2017) findings that the respondents do not understand copyright and plagiarism issues in information use and many cannot use appropriate style to cite bibliographic references in research reports. This is not misleading and discouraging to the present study because Adedokun respondents were students while this study focuses on lecturers'. The test for hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between lecturers' skills in

applying legal and social aspects of information and utilization of digital library resources. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that academics skill to apply legal and ethical issues surrounding information is significant in the use of digital library resources due to the dynamism and expansion of information in the digital format. Based on this, it was recommended that: University Management and library management should join together or collaborate to continuously educate their academic staff in issues on legal and ethical use and access to information. As this would enhance the quality of research and increase the prestige of the institutions.

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